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A resource of hope Sport is a culture, it is a language that helps nations, cities, communities and individuals to communicate. Its popularity makes it a sought-after medium for carrying messages. How can its impact be used as a tool of integration?

By Grant Jarvie and Hector Mackie



Sport is a component of society that can offer respite for individuals and contribute to social cohesion. It can have a positive effect upon communities, it can break down divides between populations, and it can connect individuals across the globe. Sport can play a part in the reconstruction of people and places, reconciliation of relationships, and the resolution of issues and animosities. It can also be the foundations from which other resources of hope can be built in order to realize lasting change.

Within Europe's cultural landscape, sport as a cultural component is regularly overlooked. Other elements that contribute

to Europe's rich culture are often given greater priority. For example, the arts, language, and working practices are regularly seen as platforms to create social change and their roles have long been recognized as having an integrative impact upon society.

Surprisingly, even when the role of sport is talked about in the same vein it is overshadowed and often seen as a lesser contributor to European culture and social cohesion. This need not be the case. Those trying to create positive social change may be missing a trick by overlooking the role sport can play in providing a resource which can contribute to social cohesion and positive cultural relations.

A recent contributor to the EUNIC yearbook stated that 'artists do not believe any more than footballers that they can create world peace' or indeed resolve global challenges, but this misses the point. There are a multitude of instances through which art and sport, or even art with sport can provide grounds for optimism. We must realize that numerous platforms can simultaneously play an important role in European cultural relations. Indeed we cannot afford to overlook any aspect of culture and at very least like art, sport creates valuable spaces where a

on in the borderlands around Kenya, South Sudan, and Uganda. The boxing girls of Kabul, described and covered in a documentary released by the Film Board of Canada tells the story of 3 girls who take up professional boxing and are determined to fight their way onto the international stage. In so doing they challenge Taliban beliefs about sport, and women and boxing in particular. Didier Drogba used his position as an international footballer to talk openly about conflict in the Ivory Coast in what became known as 'Drogba Diplomacy'. At the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, North and South Korea marched under the same flag of the Korean Peninsula. Another example is Football 4 Peace, a sports-based project for Jewish and Arab children in northern Galilee that uses football as a basis for conflict resolution training.

In these instances, sport has a role to play in bringing people into contact with one another. Yet, as stated, sport alone will not solve the problem of discrimination against ethnic minority groups or disadvantaged demographics and it needs to be incorporated within multidimensional development programmes. Within these, sport, amongst other things, can help to provide refugees and asylum seekers with a degree of normality around which other resources can be built. Meaningful sports interventions work best when sport is part of a greater picture where people can flourish within sport and therefore it can become an agent of change.

One final point needs to be made here: it is vital to recognize that one size does not fit all. Cultural diplomats, civil servants,

European cultural policy influencers and many other relevant officials need to embrace the idea that, if we are more nuanced and informed about what works where and when and under what circumstances, then sport is a valuable tool.

Sports undoubtedly help to change lives. As Nelson Mandela encapsulated: "sport has the power to change the world, it has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers." This belief in sport requires us to push beyond our current understanding of its position in culture and its role in realizing a better world in which to live. We must refocus our energies in order to understand how we can use sport efficiently and responsibly to create change.

As highlighted above, there are countless examples of sport making a positive difference. However, there are also examples of sport and sports organizations contributing to a negative ultra-competitive, hyper-masculine, and exclusive culture. For example the International Olympic Committee has come under tremendous amounts of pressure regarding how it gender tests and gender groups its Olympic athletes. In most realms of public life there are numerous categorizations for gender, not just male and female. The IOC categorizes its athletes as only male and female, and so immediately alienates and excludes swaths of the world's population. Through this example we understand that the utilization of sport must be handled

delicately in order to avoid exclusivity and the exacerbation of societal problems.

Another potential of sport is the economic benefit it can produce. In the United Kingdom, a recent story of the day highlighted the joint £5.1 billion Sky/BT sponsorship deal of English premier league football. In 2010 UNESCO pointed out that a 0.4% levy on the football revenue from Europe's top leagues – England, Germany, Spain, Italy and France – would double the existing international aid budget for basic education in low-income countries. There are many creative initiatives whereby the redistribution of the money from sport is used to develop human, social, cultural and economic capabilities. With the recognition of using sport to accumulate large sums of money and the positive role it can play in society, it becomes doubly important for us to engage with its economic potential.

Let us consider another example, this time from outside Europe. Kenyan runners have often been acknowledged for their dominance at a number of distances in athletics. Often the considerable winnings from the athletic grand-prix circuit are redistributed within the villages and communities on the Kenyan side of the rift valley. In 2010

Kenyan women were awarded in excess of £3 million.

Thus, expanding the capabilities of female runners fosters freedom in other domains. This happens through at least two channels. The first is the visibility of the runners who acquire global resources, achieve global athletic success, and then invest income directly into the local economy. The second pathway is the subjective perception that the female athlete is always a generous donor and dependable investor. This belief is partly founded on fact: several community projects financed by female runners illustrate that the female athlete redistributed her wealth generously, not just to her extended family but the wider community. In other words, non-runners believe that the income earned by a woman through athletics success would certainly extend to a wide network of people and that women's running was very much to be supported as well as encouraged for their daughters.

The two examples of football in Romani culture and running in Kenya illustrate and reinforce that sport can make a difference in a number of culturally specific situations. It also illustrates and reinforces that we must guard against an all-consuming logic that as a form of culture, sport is one universal thing or it is not. As mentioned earlier, those who seek to harness or use the power of sport need to understand in a more nuanced way what works where and when and under what circumstances. That being said, a considerable resource of hope exists but we need to go beyond narrow definitions of culture.

Sport is a culture which contributes to

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entire cultures; it is undoubtedly a culture around which and through which many conversations take place. Imagined communities are presented through sport; business is conducted through sporting contacts; it is a language that helps nations, cities, communities and individuals to communicate; its popularity makes it a sought-after medium for carrying messages; nations build soft power strategies around sport; unions such as the European Union recognize that sport has a part in cultural relations; since 2003 the United Nations has increasingly used it as a development tool; sporting icons are sought after in terms of celebrity diplomacy and it provides for a specific form of trade and labour migration as sports workers move from country to country. Those interested in European cultural relations cannot really afford to ignore anything that helps people cope with their lives, and in this sense sport can bring with it resources of hope.

There is no single agent, group, organization or cultural platform that can carry the hopes of humanity, but there are many points of engagement. If any of these can offer valuable causes for optimism, can we afford to ignore them? Can European cultural relations or European immigration policies afford to ignore sport? The possibilities that exist within sport are those that can help form different views of the world, perhaps based upon cultural practices, discovery, research, and teaching, but also based upon opportunities to foster moments of normality, capability, trust, obligations, redistribution and respect through and with sport in a more humane Europe.

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The return of the compatriots Centuries ago many Germans and Greeks settled in the giant Russian realm at the behest of the Tsar. The fall of the Soviet Union saw the repatriation of some of these minorities in both Germany and Greece, the lands of their forefathers – providing a useful opportunity to draw some comparisons. *By Christin Hess*



One group of migrants that is often overlooked is regularly referred to by different names, both by external observers and by the migrants themselves. 'Returnees', 'repatriates', co-ethnic migrants – immigrants with two separate ethnic backgrounds, often referred to in common English usage as 'ancestral migrants'. What is meant are people who, after years, decades or even centuries, return to the land their forefathers originally left for economic reasons in order to find a better life somewhere else, or were forced to flee due to political or religious persecution. In many cases a huge amount of time passes between the original emigration and the later return, which throws up a number of interesting questions relating to the importance of preserving cultural heritage and assimilation. This was the case

with the co-ethnic migrants from the former Soviet Union, who returned in thousands to their 'historic homelands' following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet empire. Among the migrants were Pontic Greeks, so-called 'Russian-Germans', ethnic Finns, Ukrainians, Poles and Russians, as well as people of Jewish origin (although here we would have to define 'co-ethnic' in a slightly different way). What it is that makes it worth focusing on these particular migrants when there have been examples of similar movements of migrants in other parts of the world, such as the Japanese returning from Brazil, or Peru (nikkei) to Japan?

Migrants from the former Soviet Union's sphere of influence are particularly interesting because their respective migrations and integration back into their 'former homelands' happened at the same time and, to an extent, under very similar circumstances.

The migration of co-ethnic or ancestral migrants is a form of migration – and this is perhaps one of its most interesting aspects – which, on the face of it at least, runs counter to the idea and reality of a progressive globalisation.

The last Soviet population census in 1989 suggested that the Greeks and Germans were among 192 different ethnic groups living there at the time. How they ended up living in Russia is easy to explain, as both groups moved there as settlers – many of them encoura-